



Session Proposals Limes Congress 2021

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The role of experimental archaeology in understanding Roman Frontiers

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Session Abstract: Recent years have seen an explosion in the growth of experimental archaeology as an area of academic research in its own right. Traditionally regarded as a tool for understanding pre-historic societies, it is increasingly an element within Roman studies. Aspects include the manufacture and testing of replica artefacts, computational considerations of logistics and supply, the reconstruction of buildings, and of course the growth of historic re-enactment, where practitioners bring their lived experience to bear in understandings of the past.

This session will explore different aspects of experimental archaeology and its potential to shine a new light on elements of the study of the Roman army and its frontiers, bringing as it does different approaches, methodologies and indeed researchers to the field. Papers are invited from speakers that wish to explore how frontiers may have functioned, both in terms of the structures that identify them, and the people who occupied them.

This will be a session with papers and a discussion which will explore the place of experimental studies within the Limes congress, and indeed Roman studies in general. It will build from a dedicated session at TRAC in Edinburgh in 2018, which itself is the foundation for the forthcoming volume 'Understanding Roman Archaeology by Experiment: A Handbook' (the co-organisers of this session are part of the editorial team for the volume).

It is envisaged that the range of papers for this session may include subjects such as:

- Insights into the lived experience of the populations of the frontiers
- Virtual models of economic/trade systems
- Consideration of weapon function set alongside frontier form
- Riverine capability of Roman fleets on the frontier rivers
- Practical considerations in the construction of frontiers and fortifications